

STATE PLANNING OFFICE NEWSLETTER

Current News and Updates for Municipal Officials

Maine State Planning Office 38 State House Station Augusta ME 04333 Web: www.maine.gov/spo Tel: 207-287-6077

Maine Coastal Program

*Working to sustain our coastal resources
and maritime economy*

Unique scenery, vibrant coastal villages, exciting small cities, working harbors, and productive nearshore waters make Maine's coast a special place. More than half of the state's population lives in the "coastal zone," an area that includes those towns that have tidal water within their boundaries. More than 5,000 miles of coastline, 136 towns, more than 4,600 islands, and state waters out to three miles comprise the coastal zone. Unorganized townships and tribal lands in Downeast Maine are also included.

Maine's coastal towns, growing at a faster pace than other areas of the state, face many challenges including maintaining working waterfronts, improving marine water quality, ensuring adequate public access, and protecting vulnerable habitats, especially beaches, bluffs and coastal wetlands.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Maine Coastal Program	1
Maine Coast Week Celebrates 20 th Anniversary	1
Director's Column	2
Operation KeepMEwarm	2
Restoring Coastal Habitats	3
Program News and Announcements	4

The Maine Coastal Program, housed at the State Planning Office, helps towns meet the challenges associated with balancing the conservation and sound development of coastal resources.

SPO receives federal funding each year from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, matched by state resources. Funds are distributed to several state agencies, and to coastal municipalities and nongovernmental organizations for a variety of programs and projects. Projects funded by the Maine Coastal Program often have relevance for the state's inland municipalities.

Please see *Maine Coastal Program* on page 5

Maine Coast Week Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Maine Coast Week will be held September 16–23. Part of an international effort to keep debris out of coastal waters, Coast Week features a statewide clean-up, art contests, and educational programs about marine life and coastal resources.

The Coastal Cleanup kicks off Coast Week on September 16. On that day, groups of volunteers gather at beaches and river shores across the state to pick up debris. Events are organized by town committees, students, scout troops, garden clubs, watershed associations, job corps, and businesses.

Last year, 2,670 volunteers covered over 100 miles of Maine's coastline and collected more than eight tons of trash. Across the globe, more than 300,000 volunteers in 88 countries collected 7.7 million pounds of debris.

Cigarette butts continue to top the list of the most abundant item found worldwide.

To learn about events open to the general public or to list your organization's event, go on-line at: www.maine.gov/spo/mcp/projects/coastweek/

Director's Column

By Martha Freeman



Though the sun sets relatively early these days, it's still summer in Maine. For me, that means there's still time to spend at a seaside cottage. Though I enjoy hiking, canoeing, and camping in Maine, I especially love sailing and

sitting along our coast. Due to the foresight of a great-great grandfather, my family's known a small patch of the Maine shore for 120 years. It gives me special pleasure, then, that the State Planning Office hosts the Maine Coastal Program. Their Maine Coast Week activities of fun, learning, and clean-up play a part in preserving our coastal heritage.

Along with our coast, there are woods, mountains, marshes, rivers, and more of our natural heritage to protect. All over Maine are places loved by natives and enjoyed by newcomers. SPO is engaged in another effort to ensure that the natural beauty and diversity of Maine thrives. In 2004, the Governor hosted the Blaine House Conference on Natural Resource-based Industries. Since then, a steering committee has continued working to protect these industries. To protect them, we must also protect the natural resources on which they depend, and which mean so much to the quality of life in our state. Recently, this committee spawned a Green Infrastructure

Please see *Director* on page 6

"As energy prices continue to rise we are preparing for what again is likely to be a very hard winter for thousands of Maine people. Operation KeepMEwarm has helped over 4,000 Maine senior citizens save money and made their homes more comfortable."

--Governor John Baldacci

Operation KeepMEwarm

Heating prices continue to rise and federally-funded heating assistance programs do not meet the demand of those in need. Operation KeepMEwarm is a volunteer-driven program aimed at winterizing the homes of Maine's senior citizens and persons with disabilities who receive heating assistance.

Between October 19–22, teams of volunteers install energy conservation products in the homes of Mainers that help to reduce energy use, energy bills, and winter drafts and to improve comfort.

The Maine Commission for Community Service and its partners organize donors of materials, handle sign-up of homeowners who need this help, and provide training to county points of contact. Locally-organized teams of volunteers, assisted by a county coordinator, perform the winterization.

How can I get this program in my community?

Municipalities can contact local service clubs, fraternities, religious groups, businesses, schools, or emergency management workers to register teams of 3–4 volunteers to work in their area. Operation KeepMEwarm supplies the materials, directions to homes, and training on how to install the winterization kits.

How can I get assistance for needy individuals in my community?

If you know of a senior citizen, person with a disability, or other individuals or families that need help with winterization of their home or who may need fuel assistance this winter, please contact Jo-Anne Choate at the Maine State Housing Authority at 626–4600 or jchoate@MAINEHOUSING.ORG.

To register a team or for more information:

Visit: www.volunteermaine.org/keepmewarm

Call: 1–207–287–5649

Or E-mail: Service.Commission@maine.gov

Restoring Coastal Habitats

Each spring, the waters boil as thousands of silver-backed alewives make their way from the sea, through rivers and streams, to spawn in Maine's freshwater lakes. These small fish are valuable to a community's culture and economy.

In May this year, the first *Spring Running* festival celebrated Maine's migrating fish and the ecology of the Kennebec River. Organized by Trout Unlimited and supported by the City of Augusta, the festival highlighted the Kennebec River as a valuable resource to the area.

On small rivers in Maine, alewife harvesting is regulated at the local level. There are 35 Maine municipalities that have commercial harvesting rights to alewives on 39 coastal streams and rivers. Some towns sell commercial harvesting rights to local fishermen, which use them as lobster bait, for the local revenue it provides. Some place restrictions on harvesting to ensure a sustainable population.

Restoring coastal and riverine habitat for native sea-run fish such as alewives, American eels, and blueback herring, as well as the salt marshes that support them, is the goal of the federally-funded habitat restoration program administered by the State Planning Office. It helps communities provide fish passage and remove dams or other obstacles. In Bristol, for example, culverts located near Pemaquid Marsh were crushed, corroded, and buried. The dis-



Salt marsh restoration project at Pemaquid Marsh in Bristol. Federal fund helped restored tidal flow to the marsh and paid for the town's culvert improvement.

repair posed safety and maintenance issues for the town. In addition, undersized culverts limited saltwater flow to the marsh. Increasing the flowage would help restore the salt marsh ecosystem and improve habitat for migratory waterfowl, shore birds, and diadromous fish that migrate between fresh and salt water to spawn. Through the habitat restoration program, the town received funding for its culvert replacement, which helped the town financially and provided an ecological benefit to boot.

Grants Now Available: The habitat restoration program is now accepting applications for grants for projects that will result in on-the-ground restoration of marine, estuarine, coastal, and freshwater habitats to benefit living marine resources, including anadromous fish species. Municipalities, non-governmental organizations, land trusts, schools, and tribal and state governments are eligible to apply. The deadline for application is November 17, 2006.



The habitat restoration grant program helped restore fish passage to Sebasticook Lake and Plymouth Pond in Newport by installing fish ladders and improving stream habitat.

Maine is attractive to federal agencies that fund restoration since it is geographically large in area and has many opportunities for restoring habitat critical to the entire Gulf of Maine region. The State Planning Office can assist towns with technical assistance to develop project proposals. For assistance, contact Jon Kachmar at 287-1913 or jon.kachmar@maine.gov

MUNICIPAL VALUATION RETURNS

This fall, municipalities are helping SPO document the state's progress toward reducing property tax burden. By filling out the voluntary LD 1 worksheet attached to the municipal valuation return, municipalities provide valuable data on property tax commitments and local decisions regarding the LD 1 limits. As of August 31, 86% of the worksheets returned were filled out. SPO thanks all those who have taken time to complete the worksheet.

REGIONAL EFFICIENCY GRANTS AVAILABLE

\$500,000 is now available from the Fund for the Efficient Delivery of Local and Regional Services to support communities in developing joint ventures to deliver government services. Municipalities, counties, and regional government subdivisions are eligible to apply. Applications are due by 2:00 p.m. on September 18, 2006. Please review the grant materials for submission instructions:

www.maine.gov/dafs/fund.htm

COASTAL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Right-of-way Discovery Grants to research forgotten or overlooked public rights-of-way to the shore. Deadline: October 9, 2006. FMI: www.maine.gov/spo/mcp/projects/getting_to_shore.php

Working Waterfront Access Pilot Grants to provide permanent public access to waterfronts for commercial fisheries. Deadline: November 1, 2006. FMI:

www.maine.gov/dmr/news/WorkingWaterfrontPilotProject.htm

Habitat Restoration Grants for on-the-ground restoration of habitat to benefit living marine resources. Deadline: November 17, 2006. FMI: gulfofmaine.org/habitatrestoration/

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RULE REVISION UNDERWAY

In order to improve the local comprehensive planning process, SPO is drafting a new rule that governs the state review of comprehensive plans. The intent is to expedite the review process and at the same time make plans more useful.

The office hopes to make a consistency finding more transparent by providing clear, minimum standards; make it easier for towns to prepare plans by reducing data requirements; and streamline the review process by focusing the state's review on the future land use section of the plan and providing a self-assessment tool.

We hope that you will participate in the development of this rule by attending public meetings and providing comments (see schedule of meetings below). We want to hear your ideas about our new proposed approach.

Opening Stakeholders' Meeting – Augusta
Wednesday, September 20, 2006, 9:00am–noon
Cross State Office Building, Room 103
And by video conference in Presque Isle, Machias, and North Berwick

First Regional Meeting – Houlton
Thursday, October 12, 6:30pm – 9:00pm
Houlton Regional Hospital—FA Peabody Room

Second Regional Meeting – Waterville
Wednesday, October 18, 6:30pm – 9:00pm
Waterville City Hall Council Chambers

Third Regional Meeting – Saco
Thursday, October 26, 6:30pm – 9:00pm
Saco City Hall Auditorium

Closing Stakeholders' Meeting – Augusta
Thursday, November 9, 2006, 9:00am – noon
Cross State Office Building, Room 103
And by video conference in Presque Isle, Machias, and North Berwick

For more information or to offer comments: www.spo-comp-plan-rules.com

Maine Coastal Program

Maine Coastal Program from page 1

The following list of but a few resources depicts the range of coastal program activities and highlights some recent tools for coastal towns. In addition, the coastal program currently has three grant offerings that are described on page 4.

Working Waterfronts

A menu of techniques that towns can use to preserve and enhance areas for marine-dependent businesses can be found at:

www.maine.gov/spo/mcp/wwi/index.php

Reducing Risks from Coastal Hazards

Bluff suitability maps to advise towns and landowners about landslide potential are at:

<http://www.maine.gov/doc/nrimc/mgs/pubs/series.htm>

Information about a “beach scoring system” to evaluate erosion control options for sand beaches is available at:

<http://www.maine.gov/doc/nrimc/mgs/explore/marine/virtual/scoring/slides.htm>

Growing Smarter While Improving Water Quality

A model to help towns work together to develop a stormwater utility is available at:

www.maine.gov/spo/mcp/downloads/MaineStormWaterUtility.pdf

A model ordinance for low impact development is in progress.

Protecting Vulnerable Habitats and Scenic Areas

A strategy for restoring Maine’s sand beaches is available at:

www.maine.gov/dep/blwq/topic/dunes/report06_protect.pdf

New guidance for siting docks and piers is in progress. An update of the methodology for scenic resources inventories and development of guidelines for towns and land trusts is underway.

Our Changing Coast

Recently, Evan Richert, who directs the Gulf of Maine Census on Marine Life, spoke about the impact of population shifts and coastal development on communities. “By 2020, the entire coast from Kittery to Penobscot Bay will take on the characteristics of suburban landscapes,” he said. He believes that there is not sufficient funding to pursue aggressive land protection and most town land use ordinances are inadequate to prevent sprawl, in fact, some still mandate it. The ideal would be to concentrate development in existing towns and cities and preserve rural countryside.



A coast week clean-up in Brooksville by elementary students in 2005

For more information about the Maine Coastal Program, please contact Lorraine Lessard at 287-1486 or lorraine.lessard@maine.gov or visit the program’s web site at

<http://www.maine.gov/spo/mcp>

To discuss the priority needs of your coastal town, please call Kathleen Leyden, Director of the Maine Coastal Program, at 287-3144 or e-mail her at kathleen.leyden@maine.gov

State Planning Office
38 State House Station
Augusta ME 04333

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO..8..
AUGUSTA, MAINE

State Planning Office

38 State House Station
Augusta ME 04333

<http://www.maine.gov/spo>

Phone:

207.287.6077

E-Mail:

linda.c.laplante@maine.gov



Printed on recycled paper under
appropriation #010 07B 1100

Director from page 2

Coalition to propose ways to fund the acquisition and upkeep of Maine places of natural resource recreation and work. The Coalition is open to anyone.

Join in Coast Week, but join too in preserving the wider green infrastructure of Maine!

For more information about the Coalition, visit www.state.me.us/spo/natural/gov/ or contact Linda.C.LaPlante@maine.gov.

For more information about Coast Week, visit www.maine.gov/spo/mcp/projects/coastweek/ or contact: Theresa.Torrent-Ellis@maine.gov

*Would you like to receive this newsletter electronically?
Send your e-mail address to: linda.c.laplante@maine.gov*
